

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Robert L. Davis
Jennifer Maguire

SUBJECT: PUBLIC SAFETY STUDY
SESSION FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS

DATE: May 23, 2008

Approved

Christine J. Shuppen

Date

5-23-08

BACKGROUND

During the budget study sessions for the 2008-2009 Proposed Budget, Councilmember Cortese requested clarification on recent Police Department statistics. This memorandum responds to this request for clarification and additional information requested by Councilmember Cortese as part of the Manager's Budget Addenda process, as outlined below.

ANALYSIS

1. *Is it accurate that auto theft and property crimes are up, and graffiti has increased by 2,000 percent since 2006?*

No, auto theft and property crimes have decreased slightly. In comparing calendar year 2006 to calendar year 2007, auto theft was down by 10% (7,139 vs. 6,413 respectively) and property crimes were down by 1% (24,240 vs. 24,062 respectively).

No, the noted 1,911% increase in graffiti was based on unreliable survey data. The 2008 Graffiti Survey Memo prepared by the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department (PRNS) Anti-Graffiti and Litter Program (AGLP) cites a 1,911% increase in graffiti from 2006 (129 graffiti tags) to 2007 (2,594 graffiti tags). However, as noted at the budget study session by PRNS, irregularities in the 2006 survey were identified. The actual low point cited by the Department is 2005, in which 2,035 graffiti tags were counted. Using this year as the low point, there was a 683% increase in graffiti tags comparing the lowest reliable survey count to the 2008 survey (13,902 graffiti tags).

2. *Is it accurate that there were only 45 qualified candidates for 53 open positions in the most recent recruitment?*

Yes, the Police Department had only 45 qualified candidates in the most recent academy although the Department was authorized and budgeted to hire 53 candidates. Even if the

Department brings a qualified candidate to the hiring board, the candidate must undergo a psychological exam, the results of which are presented at that time. Several of the candidates did not successfully pass the psychological exam; therefore, the Department was only able to hire 45 candidates. However, the Department recently hired five laterals to partially make up for the lower number of qualified candidates for the current academy.

3. *It is accurate that 27% of the city's operating budget goes to the Police Department and if yes, is it further accurate that this figure is lower than what similarly sized cities' police departments receive?*

In the 2008-2009 Proposed Budget, 30.42% of the General Fund budget is allocated to the Police Department. For the 2007-2008 Adopted Budget, however, the Police Department budget made up 27.25% of the City's General Fund. It should be noted that police costs that are budgeted outside of the Department's appropriations are not included in this calculation, such as City-Wide Expenses including workers' compensation claims and sick leave payments upon retirements.

A recent Mercury News op-ed column by San José Police Officers' Association President Bobby Lopez noted that the City of San José spends far less on public safety than similar sized California cities. The column cited that the 10 largest California cities spend 36 percent on average on safety and that Bay Area cities with populations over 100,000 spend 35 percent.

The Police Department contacted several cities to request information regarding the percentage of General Fund budget allocated to the Police Department. In response, the City of San Diego reported it spends approximately 36% of its General Fund on police services. The City of Oakland reported it currently spends approximately 39.9% of its General Fund on police services. The City of Los Angeles reported it currently spends approximately 36.6% of its General Fund on police services, and the City of Fresno reported it currently spends approximately 50.2% of its General Fund on police services.

It should be noted, however, that drawing conclusions from a comparison of cities' spending levels without a detailed review of operations and budgeting practices is not recommended. Without such a review, it is impossible to ensure that an "apples-to-apples" comparison has been drawn. While one city may provide jail services or a full forensics lab, another may not. Additionally, one city may budget according to full cost accounting principles while another may choose not to. Therefore, confirming at this time whether the City of San José Police Department receives proportionately less of the General Fund than similarly sized cities' police departments is not possible.

4. *Is it accurate that the size of the Police Department has remained relatively the same (around 1,400 officers) since 1994, despite the fact that our population has grown by 140,000?*

While police authorized staffing levels have not kept pace with the growth in population during this period, authorized staffing levels have increased since 1994-1995. The 2008-2009 Proposed

Budget authorized sworn staffing of 1,385 reflects a net increase of 108 since 1994-1995. In 1994-1995, authorized sworn staffing was 1,277. The biggest increase during this period was from 1,304 in 1997-1998 to 1,343 in 1998-1999. By 2001-2002, the Department authorized sworn staffing grew to 1379. However, sworn staffing dropped to 1353 by 2005-2006.

Using population estimates from 1995 of 825,547 compared to today's estimate of approximately 989,500 (California Department of Finance), the population of the City has grown by 163,953, or 19.9%, compared to growth of sworn police personnel during the same time period of 8.5%.

5. *Would it be accurate to say that if the population trend continues as such, and our force remains the same size, we will have difficulty responding to 911 calls and have difficulty investigating crimes?*

The question is a difficult one to answer since the size of the population is not the sole factor driving crime trends. Crime trends are driven by many factors, including the health of the economy, which impacts the health of our community and neighborhoods, the types of land uses that are allowed, the type of growth that is approved (i.e., land use decisions related to development), and the number and location of alcohol sales that are permitted.

Due to resourceful, professional management, the Police Department has been successful in applying limited resources toward a wide range of prevention, enforcement, and intervention issues, even as the population has increased and resources have diminished. The cumulative impact of staffing constraints, however, has made it difficult to keep pace with crime trends and patterns, as witnessed by the rise in property crimes. From 1998 to present, the City population increased by approximately 10%. This upward trend is expected to continue with a projected population exceeding one million residents this summer, not including population increases from County pocket annexations (approximately 18,000).

Without additional staffing, the trend of the Department's most serious calls for service increasing with officers' opportunities for self-initiated activities declining, may continue, resulting in a primarily reactive, calls-for-service Patrol Division. Further, the alignment of Bureau of Investigations' personnel with priority to crimes against persons investigations may continue to erode the Department's capabilities in dealing with property crimes.

In 2007-2008, the Department has seen a significant improvement for the average response time for priority one/two events. These improvements are a result of the Department utilizing new technology, such as the Automated Vehicle Location (AVL). However, even with advances in technology, the Department will need to continue to prioritize service needs to allocate limited resources toward increasing service demands.

COORDINATION

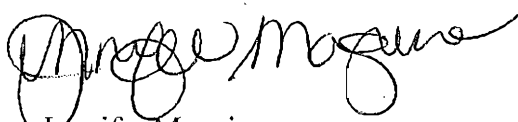
This MBA has been coordinated with the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department.

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

May 23, 2008

Subject: Study Session Follow Up Questions

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Maguire". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jennifer" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Maguire".

Jennifer Maguire
Acting Budget Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Davis". The signature is cursive and stylized, with the first initial "R." clearly visible and the last name "Davis" written in a flowing script.

Robert L. Davis
Chief of Police

RLD: LR: JM